

Senior Research Staff on International Communism

COMMUNISM IN EASTERN EUROPE

Post-Stalin Developments in the Satellites

CIA/SRS-7
PART II/D



31 December 1958

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15 January 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Recipients of SRS-7, Part II/D

"Communism in Eastern Europe" (Czechoslovakia), dated 31 Decem-

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Please change the number on the cover of this study to read "Part II/ \underline{E} " instead of "Part II/ \underline{D} ."

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COMMUNISM IN EASTERN EUROPE: Post-Stalin Developments in the Satellites

CIA/SRS-7

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PART II/D

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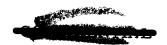
This is a speculative study which has been discussed with US Government intelligence officers but has not been formally coordinated. It is based on information available to SRS as of 20 November 1958.

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PART II/D

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

1. Among the European Satellites of the USSR, Czechoslovakia is in a class by itself, since it is the only one in which the Communist regime was not imposed by Russian bayonets and which was a highly developed industrial country, practically unscathed by the war. Czechoslovakia is, therefore, the best example of Communism in action under the conditions envisaged by Marx, although it misses being a perfect example because of the country's geographical proximity to the USSR.

The Situation at the Beginning of 1956

- 2. Economic conditions had improved in Czechoslovakia in 1955. According to official claims, the growth of gross industrial production equalled the previous peak year's (1953) figure and the real wages index rose from 59 to 72, while the cost of living dropped from 139 to 130. The highest level of pre-war agricultural production was claimed to have been exceeded in 1955, for the first time. Complaints of food and other shortages were comparatively rare in Czechoslovakia, by far the most prosperous of the Satellites. In political and intellectual spheres, there were no signs of ferment, in striking contrast to Poland and Hungary. Not that everybody was satisfied in Czechoslovakia, far from it, but there was less economic cause for dissatisfaction. There had been no split of any consequence in the Party, in which the Stalinists, headed by Antonin Novotny, the General Secretary, and Viliam Siroky, the Prime Minister, held complete control, with President Zapotocky presumably smoothing out eventual disagreements.
- 3. The economic plans of the regime, announced in February 1956, mirrored a conviction that the troubles which had set in after Stalin's death in 1953 had been successfully overcome. Krutina, at the time Minister of Agriculture, announced on February 6 that 349 new kolkhozes had been





established during the past year, 25.4 percent of the total farm land being now collectivized. "We shall continue on this road. We shall set up new collectives with still greater vigor and strength..., "Krutina announced, disdaining the assurances of "voluntariness" customary in the Orbit.

4. The 1956 budget, introduced on February 9, showed a 17.4 percent increase over 1955 in investment in heavy industry, but, true to the Khrushchev line, an almost identical increase in agricultural investment. As further proof of the regime's solicitude for the people, a price reduction on a number of consumer goods, estimated to increase purchasing power by 6.5 percent, followed on April 1.

The Effect of the 20th Congress of the CPSU in the CSR

5. The top leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, being one of those which was quite satisfied with conditions as they were and in the happy position of being rid of Stalin's contemporary, Gottwald, apparently decided that, so long as the 20th Congress had reaffirmed the admissibility of different roads to socialism, it might as well differ from the USSR in the matter of de-Stalinization. When, therefore, the regional Party meetings held on March 5 to discuss the lessons of the 20th Congress revealed considerable lower level interest in this particular subject, the official press service, CTK, issued the following day a lengthy report in which the chief points were applied in general terms to Czechoslovakia, but Stalin was defended rather than accused. While the report admitted the necessity of overcoming "all the remnants and the recurrences of the cult of the individual" and agreed that "in the later period of his activities, Stalin committed many mistakes, shortcomings appeared in his work, such as in the principle of collective leadership, "it also declared that it was necessary to see "the positive role which Stalin played." His was the "historical merit" of having "resolutely frustrated the attempts of enemies who tried to destroy the Party and Soviet State." In other words, Stalin had, according to the report, saved Russia and Communism. How much did his mistakes and shortcomings weigh in the balance?



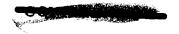


- 6. As more and more details of Khrushchev's indictment of Stalin leaked out and news of developments in Poland kept coming in, feeling in Czechoslovakia rose considerably. The Party leadership found it expedient to howl with the wolves for a while. In a report issued on April 10, the Central Committee of the Party gave an extensive criticism of Stalin's mistakes and admitted that the cult of personality had seriously corrupted the Czechoslovak Party. Two days later, the Party mouthpiece, Rude Pravo, carried the further admission that the security organs had frequently violated socialist legality and that a special commission appointed by the Political Bureau had been investigating trials for the last 18 months. It had been found, the paper stated, that it was Rudolf Slansky, the Party leader executed in November 1952, and two of his associates, who had introduced the practice of violating socialist legality, and that these violations had continued even after his exposure. Persons found to have been innocent had been released.
- 7. The providential discovery that Slansky had been responsible for the death of many innocent people presumably made it impossible for the Czechoslovak Communists to follow the example of their Hungarian and Bulgarian comrades in parallel cases and to rehabilitate him. It was true, as Premier Siroky admitted to a New York Times correspondent on April 13, that Slansky had been falsely accused of Titoism and that "certain manifestations of anti-Semitism" eleven of the fourteen defendants in the Slansky trial had been Jews - "had been mistakingly introduced," but Slansky had on the other hand been subsequently found guilty of another serious crime. His culpability was, on balance, no less. Besides, Slansky's and his associates' conviction as "Trotskyite, Zionist, bourgeois, nationalist traitors and enemies of the Czechoslovak people and of Socialism" stood. Siroky was apparently not in the least troubled by the fact that all the foreign fellow conspirators besides Tito named by Slansky in his confession - Gomulka, Kostov, and Rajk had been officially declared innocent, or by the fact that



Rude Pravo had the day before denounced the sentencing of people "on the mere basis of their own confession obtained by illegal methods, without there being any material proof." That apparently only applied to sentences of which Slansky was the author, not the victim. Neither did Siroky explain why the three live members of the Slansky conspiracy, who had received only jail sentences, were being released.

- 8. The episode spotlighted the embarrassing situation which the Czechoslovak holdovers from the Stalin era shared with most of their satellite colleagues. They were selfish and foresighted enough to oppose de-Stalinization and liberalization, yet unable openly to contradict Khrushchev, on whose support their continuance in power depended more than ever. A concrete proof of their disorientation was their failure to issue directives to the lower level apparatchiki who had the difficult task of presiding over local Party meetings in which the "historic" resolutions of the 20th Congress were discussed. The result was an outburst of criticism at the lower levels, which it seemed expedient to calm by jettisoning some expendable ballast and granting some superficial concessions, but without sacrificing any of the material bases of power.
- 9. The victim selected to be thrown to the wolves was the personally unpopular Minister of Defense, Alexej Cepicka. His expulsion from the Politburo and dismissal from the posts of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense were announced on April 25, on the grounds of "shortcomings and mistakes he committed in the execution of state and party functions." But the fact that he was a son-in-law of Gottwald was certainly more important. Further developments confirmed the danger for an unpopular dictatorship in making concessions. The next day, the newspapers carried an article by a former president of the Slovak Academy of Science strongly criticizing the regime's educational methods. Rude Pravo (April 27) revealed the existence of intense dissatisfaction among the workers:





The trade union movement in Czechoslovakia underwent a crisis recently which
resulted in the isolation of trade union officials from the membership and the rest of
the workers. The chief cause of this crisis
was the fact that the workers were unable to
express their own views because of the
intense centralism of the Central Trade
Union Council... Cases in which trade union
functionaries forget that care for the workers
in the wage sector is also an indivisible component of trade union work continue to
multiply.

Prace, the trade union paper, which had, on April 10, admitted that trade unions "silence criticism, suppress intra-Union democracy, and deprive the members of the right to free factual debates," called on April 27 for the "democratic regeneration of the National Assembly and the National Committees."

10. Intellectuals also were restive. The Czechoslovak Writers' Congress, meeting April 22-29, deplored the damage to literature caused by the cult of personality and condemned the "code of esthetics" which was supposed to guide writers as an "incredible collection of half-truths and regular inconsistencies. "Two writers, Jaroslav Seifert and Frantisek Hrubin, insisted that writers should represent the conscience of their nation and accused them of having betrayed their mission by indulging in evasions and lies. Even the Congress chairman, Jan Drda, considered a Party stalwart, declared that in the future, writers must reflect the people's "justified dissatisfactions" and take into account the conflicts and "contradictions" of everyday life. Although the Party had, in a message read by President Zapotocky, announced its intention of giving writers "more freedom" and encouraged them to be "bold and fearless" in their creative work, it was getting more than it bargained for. Zapotocky took the floor a second





time and rebuked the more outspoken writers for their wholesale condemnation of the past and for their failure to understand the Party's present policy. Nevertheless, Hrubin and Seifert were elected members of the new "collective leadership," while two orthodox writers sponsored by the regime were blackballed.

ll. In a commentary on the Writers' Congress, broadcast by Radio Bratislava on May 2, 1956, the writer Ladislav Blasko declared that it had manifested two distinct trends. One trend was permeated with the old spirit of comouflage and pretense.

In contrast to this trend, the Congress became a fighting arena where opinions were exchanged... Many writers admitted their mistakes...and /it is clear/that they lived through everything which today is passing through the minds of our people.

- 12. Student meetings were even more outspoken. Typical resolutions demanded, besides greater freedom for students, numerous political reforms: release of political prisoners, permission for opposition parties to function effectively, an end to newspaper censorship and to jamming, access to banned Western literature, and freedom to travel abroad. Some resolutions protested against the unjustified idealization of the Soviet Union and the privileges accorded Soviet citizens, and asked pointed questions about the Jachymov uranium mines.
- of stormy sessions. Mlada Fronta (April 27) reported that besides excessive study hours, compulsory attendance and overcrowding, the "unpersuasive and dogmatic lectures in Marxism-Leninism" and the Minister of Education were sharply criticized. On May 6, the paper announced that the Minister had received the delegates of the Youth League and that many of the demands would probably be met.





14. More sensational still was the permission granted the students to hold the Majales, a traditional student parade, for the first time since 1938. On May 20, columns of students carrying placards reproducing many of the student protests and demands and dragging floats bitingly satirizing conditions in Czechoslovakia marched unmolested down the streets of Prague. The chants of the marching students are reported to have included demands for the removal of President Zapotocky and First Slovak Party Secretary Bacilek.

15. The Party, represented by Siroky, himself a Slovak, appears to have been completely on the defensive at the meeting of the Central Committee of the Slovak Party, held on May 10-11, in Bratislava. Siroky again put all the blame for the violations of socialist legality in the years 1949-52 on Slansky, Stalin and Beria. It was a modern repetition of the Fall, with Stalin and Beria in the role of the serpent, Slansky in that of Eve, and the Party in that of innocent, but weak, Adam.

16. "The root of our shortcomings," Siroky declared in his closing speech on May 11, 1956,

is the fact that the Party as a whole fell prey to the cult of the individual, dogmatism, one-sided emphasis on the suppressive functions of the state apparatus to the detriment of its economic organizational and cultural educational functions. In the interest of historical truth it must again be stressed that the methods of violation of socialist legality and illegal investigations were brought into the Party by Slansky...who was able to take advantage of the abnormal set-up of the Party (which had both a chairman and a secretary-general and a large presidium) to interfere in the most sensitive sectors of state and public life. Slansky, together with Taussigova and Svab,





placed their people in the security apparatus... It is right to ask: How is it that these facts were not unmasked earlier? That Slansky's work had outlived its creator was possible because of the corrupting influences of the cult of personality.

As a further contributing cause, Siroky listed Stalin's "incorrect conception that class warfare grows with the building of socialism."

- 17. Siroky exonerated Slansky once again of the charge of Titoism, the mistake having been due to the fact that it was "based on the provocative and false charges of Beria, who, "he explained, "organized actions on an international scale" -- in other words, controlled the police of the "sovereign" people's democracies.
- 18. As a sop to the strong separatist feelings of the Slovaks -- the Slovak Party organ, Pravda, had on May I candidly admitted the existence of an atmosphere of lack of confidence, suspicion, and fear between Czechs and Slovaks, engendered by the neglect of Leninist principles -- Siroky promised an increase in the responsibilities of the Slovak National Council, and announced the release of Novomesky, a Slovak, for good behavior in prison. But two other Slovaks, Clementis, who had been executed with Slansky, and Husak, still in prison, were not going to be rehabilitated. They had, he asserted, not been sentenced for "ideological differences but for activities threatening the results of the Slovak national uprising." In other words, their crime had been Slovak nationalism.
- 19. Unrest among the university students continued unabated. "After the 20th Congress," a student wrote in a letter published in Mlada Fronta of May 22, "the interest of the people in the truth, in explanations of as yet unclarified questions, is increasing. First of all, youth craves the truth." Four days later, the paper wrote



many of the students' criticisms were justified. However, the Party Central Committee resolution passed as early as April 16 already pointed to shortcomings and ways of reform. Unfortunately, the ferment and turmoil at the universities in recent days was in some cases misused to proclaim basically wrong ideas and demands...

What Mlada Fronta failed to explain was that the Party resolution had been couched in the most general terms, calling indeed for improvement in educational standards, but ignoring most of the students' demands for improvement in the schools, and all demands for greater political freedom.

20. The government's first reaction to the Majales which had demonstrated the degree of popular dissatisfaction with the regime more spectacularly than anything else, especially to the foreign journalists present, was revealed by Premier Siroky in a press conference on May 24. He denied that students had or would be arrested and added:

It is no great harm for the people's democratic order when young people consider things and do some thinking and it is no disaster when young students are critical of us... The students have the right to express their ideas aloud and we have the right to declare: We agree with you in this or that matter, and we disagree in this and that.

But after more mature reflection, the Party leaders thought up something better: On June 13, Radio Bratislava revealed that "organs of the Ministry of the Interior have arrested a group which produced the so-called students' resolutions." The group consisted of four "former capitalist elements," all well over 40, who "had anonymously sent resolutions with demands aimed at the regime to various offices and organizations, pretending that these were students' resolutions."

COMPTENDE

21. The arrest of those allegedly responsible for the manifestations of student dissatisfaction was the first concrete example of the attitude toward the Czechoslovak thaw finally decided upon by the Party leaders during the last week of May and the first week of June. It was made public in the course of the National Party Conference which had to be postponed to June 11, five days later than scheduled.

The June 1956 Party Conference

22. In opening the conference, President Zapotocky repudiated any insinuation that the Czechoslovak Communist Party, the CSCP, might ever have been wrong on any important issue, by the simple device of claiming the corrections of mistakes as proofs of infallibility. Zapotocky asserted, for example, that "the liquidation of the abnormal relations - I do not hesitate to say 'incorrect attitude' - toward Yugoslavia as a country building socialism, " as well as the switch back to priority for heavy industry by the 10th Congress in June 1954 had been "correct." In a similar vein, First Party Secretary Novotny mentioned in his speech that some Party organizations, chiefly in Prague, had demanded that an extraordinary Party Congress be convened. The organizations, Novotny claimed, represented only 15,000 out of 1.4 million Party members. Moreover, he said.

such a demand would only be justified if it were necessary to alter the general line of the Party, if the Central Committee did not want to solve, or was incapable of solving, grave problems of our country, or if in a large section of the Party differences of opinions arose... This is not the case...the Central Committee and the Party are in full agreement.

CHARLES TO THE TANK

Novotny asserted that the 20th CPSU Congress in February 1956 had been "a memorable landmark in the development of the entire Communist movement...had dealt firmly with the noxious and harmful influences of the cult of the individual, the consequences of which, deforming the true noble face of Socialism, penetrated widely into the activities of all Communist Parties," but he also claimed that, the 10th CSCP Congress in June 1954 having already established the correct line, "we have nothing to change in it..." This was supposedly proved by the fact that industrial and agricultural production had increased in 1954-1955, chiefly by "removing many serious disproportions in industrial production," and that "total personal consumption" had increased by 25.7 percent.

23. From the premise that whatever mistakes had been committed in the past had long since been corrected, the conclusion followed naturally that criticism, while recognized as extremely beneficial in theory, had to be sharply curtailed in practice.

A whole series of confused views had appeared... generally speaking it can be said that these views reflect the petit-bourgeois criticism of Party policy. In certain cases, they even lead to malicious attacks against the Party and its principles.

Novotny continued:

Voices have been heard, calling, under the pretext of freedom, for a return to pre-February /1948/ conditions...Certain Communists were at fault for failing to silence these alien voices at the very start...They failed to realize such instances are not criticism, but attacks on the Party line, on Socialism in general.

CONTRACT

Those guilty were

mostly people burdened with petty-bourgeois and bourgeois ideology, as well as people not sufficiently mature in their class consciousness and political views...that is, some students, some members of the intelligentsia, some officials from various government departments and institutions.

Novotny specifically refused the demand that the press "comment freely on all questions...including the Party... We have always rejected the independence of the press from the Party and its ideas, and still firmly reject it, "for, he asserted, the Party expresses the people's will.

- 24. The agitation among the students was described by Novotny as the result of attempts by "reactionary elements...to infiltrate the students... They were condemned by the overwhelming majority of students and university workers...Our people will not tolerate any kind of abuse of our universities." The compulsory lectures on Marxism-Leninism, he promised, needed to, and would be, "improved," but there could be no question of abolishing them. But, he continued, "another important task is to improve the selection of students. The composition of university students according to their social origin does not correspond to the class structure of our society."
- 25. Novotny thus provided both an excuse for the anti-regime attitude of the student body and a warning to any students who might persist in it that they faced the risk of being classified as of undesirable social background. Turning to the intellectuals and artists, Novotny declared that the Party would not regiment art. It was clear, however, that intellectual freedom would be severely limited, for he also claimed for the Party

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CONTENTAL

the "full right to express its views about the work of our writers and artists." The Party's views turned out to be that some of the opinions expressed at the recent Writers' Congress had been "distorted in the direction of an unprincipled liberalism" and that "even some of our Communist writers failed to show determined opposition to attacks against our People's Democratic system."

26. The underlying justification for the "hard" line adopted by the Party was presumably to be found in Novotny's statement that, although Stalin had of course been wrong to maintain that the class struggle grew sharper as Communism advanced,

in our society, a class struggle exists and will exist so long as we do not effect the complete socialization of the means of production, so long as remnants of the exploiting classes remain in it, and so long as the capitalist world remains in being.

The means of production as yet not completely socialized were the remaining private farms, and the "remnants of the exploiting class" were the kulaks, although Novotny himself admitted that "capitalist exploitation of the village population has been practically eliminated." Much more important undoubtedly was the fact, not listed among the reasons justifying the continuation of the class struggle, but admitted further on by Novotny, that it included "the fight against the vestiges of capitalist views in the minds of the people and the recrudescence of bourgeois ideologies, the re-education of the old and the education of the new intelligentsia, the struggle against bureaucracy, etc." Novotny thus admitted that in Czechoslovakia bourgeois ideologies had been gaining ground, and that the old intelligentsia had not been re-educated or the new one

COMPIDENT

educated. Novotny left no doubt that extension of bourgeois freedoms would not be tolerated in Czechoslovakia. According to him, what was decisive in democratization, was

the participation of workers, farmers, and other working people in the administration of the state. From this decisive standpoint we have done more for real- and not merely formal-democracy than was, or could have been, done even by the most democratic republic.

27. Very generously, however, the Party leadership was prepared to correct certain shortcomings which had crept into the practical application of the right principle. Novotny conceded that the basic principle of democratic centralism had been distorted, and that the local national committees had been left inadequate powers and financial resources in such sectors as agriculture, local economy, health services, culture, education, and the like. Especially in Slovakia, centralization had been excessive. Decentralization of authority would, Novotny hoped, reduce not only costs but also the inflated and paralyzing bureaucracy.

28. To prevent any recurrence of Security Force excesses, Novotny promised strict Party and government control over the apparatus - implying apparently that the Party had been unaware of, or unable to check, its activities in the past. Additional guarantees were to be provided by appointing "examining magistrates" and by declaring confessions insufficient to prove guilt. Novotny warned, however, against any underestimation of the "important part played by the Security authorities in guarding our People's Democracy."

-14-

- 29. Concerning the Slansky trial, Novotny asserted once again that there were "no grounds for his rehabilitation." This in spite of his statement that "the activities of Slansky and his associates were described completely untruthfully in connection with Yugoslav personalities, " and that "certain persons were named who in fact had nothing in common with Slansky's activities, "i.e., Konni Zilliacus and the Field brothers. Since Rajk, Gomulka and Kostov had already been exonerated, one was left to wonder with whom Slansky could have maintained the treasonable contacts of which he was declared to have been guilty. This could not inspire much confidence in the honesty of the investigation and rectification of past illegalities stated by Minister of the Interior Barak to be underway. As for the present, Barak prudently limited himself to the assertion that "today, there are no more instances of violation of socialist legality in the course of interrogations."
- 30. Presumably as an earnest of its good intentions, the regime sacrificed the Prosecutor General, Vaclav Ales, who had been promoted in 1953 for his good work as prosecutor of Slansky, together with the Minister of Culture, Ladislav Stoll, accused at the Writers' Congress of Stalinist oppression of writers.
- 31. On the other hand, it was revealed during the discussion of the Party statutes that a proposal to allow secret ballotting for all Party organs, as in the USSR, was turned down with the revealing explanation that "experience has shown that by instituting such secret ballots a number of organizations could be misused /sic/ by the election of candidates who offer no guarantee that they would fight for the correct policy of the Party."

CONTIDENTINE

32. A slight concession was made to the workers. They were promised a reduction of the work week to 46 hours, effective October 1.

The Second Five Year Plan

- embodied in the Second Five Year Plan was expounded by Premier Siroky on June 12. As in the rest of the Bloc, the accent was on heavy industry and agriculture. By 1960, production of capital goods was to increase 57 percent, that of consumer goods 40 percent, and agriculture 30 percent. Investment was to increase 61.5 percent over the 1951-1955 figures, absorbing about a quarter of the national income, which was to increase by 48 percent. But Siroky admitted that in the absence of substantial manpower reserves, "nearly nine-tenths of the increase in industrial production is to be achieved by a rise in labor productivity," which demanded "a substantial rise in the technical standard of industry and the national economy."
- 34. But Siroky had to admit that as far as the individual Czechoslovak was concerned, the prospects were less rosy. He said:

Many proposals contained suggestions for building new factories, railways, roads, cultural and social institutions, houses, and schools. In many cases, these demands are justified, but at the same time it is obvious that the proposed expansion of capital investment...reaches the limit of what is tolerable...It must also be said that we see no way of taking in hand during the Second Five Year Plan a comprehensive solution of the problem of reconstructing and modernizing

CONTIDUNTAL

some branches of light industry...
the Central Committee and the
Government are fully aware of the
housing shortage...Income is not the
only sign of the living standard.

- of improvement of the living standard to the field of food. By a curious coincidence, agricultural production and real wages were to increase by the same amount by 1960, by 30 percent. It remained to be seen, however, whether the increase in agricultural investment would not be outweighed by the effect of the intensified collectivization campaign announced by Siroky. The socialized area, covering at the time about 40 percent of the cultivated land, was to become "decisively preponderant" by 1960.
- 36. The promise of greater powers to Slovak national organs was implemented by a constitutional amendment passed by the National Assembly on August 1, 1956, which granted them more autonomy in economic and social matters. But no "contradictions" between the legislative enactments in Prague and Bratislava were to be tolerated, and it was Prague which decided what was "contradictory."
- 37. In striking contrast with Poland and Hungary, the manifestations of popular discontent with regime policies, which had been very outspoken in April and May in the CSR, ceased completely after the June Party Conference. This did not mean, however, that the people were satisfield with the regime's petty concessions, only that they were not prepared to challenge its: "That's all you get." Bruno Kohler, Secretary of the Party Central Committee, addressing the graduates of the Party University in August, warned the malcontents that they could expect no further concessions. Firmness was necessary, he told them,

CONTRACT

because some ideological workers are succumbing to various reports /from other Satellites/ and, without thoroughly comparing them with our conditions, are drawing conclusions for the policy of the Party...However, in our country we have to proceed according to our own conditions. It was precisely this principle which was strongly stressed by the 20th Congress of the CPSU...

The whole ugly campaign of the imperialists, using the measures against the cult of personality to fight socialism had failed, Kohler asserted, "because of the ideological firmness of our functionaries and Party members."

38. The existence of considerable unrest among the workers was conceded by President Zapotocky at the September 28, 1956, meeting of the Party Central Committee. 'Because of lack of clarity and misunderstanding of the correct principles of compensation for work, there arise in plants various disagreements which sometimes end in partial or even several hourlong strikes." It goes without saying that Zapotocky "definitely condemned the notion." Chiefly to blame, according to him, were the trade unions which had failed to make it clear to the workers that they were committing the absurdity of striking against themselves, since they were both the ruling class and the owners of the means of production! But he also had to admit that "the vast majority of the workers today are dissatisfied with the trade union organization. " The reason was perhaps supplied by the Central Committee decision which described the task of the trade unions as that of leading "the broadest masses of the

CONFIDENTIAL

VIVINITE

working people to an active participation in Socialist construction" and not to "defend the interests of the workers against their Socialist state." 1

- 39. By a remarkable coincidence, coal production, which had been substantially in excess of plan during the first half year, dropped sharply below plan in September. ² Faced with a serious threat to the entire economic program, the government tried desperately to recruit additional mine workers, the shortage of manpower being chiefly blamed for the situation. But as it never was claimed that the number of miners had dropped between July and September, the explanation was far from convincing.
- 40. Further evidence of the trade unions' lack of success in their task of enlightening the workers was provided by the meeting of the Central Trade Union Council October 19-20, in which its chairman admitted that several more cases of work stoppages had occurred, in protest against increased work norms. There was no mention of reprisals against the strikers.

The Czechoslovak October

41. Whether the regime would have been so lenient toward the ungrateful workers had it not been for developments just beyond Czechoslovakia's eastern and southern borders, may be doubted. That

 $^{^{}m I}$ Radio Prague, September 28, 1956.

²Radio Prague, September 22 and October 8, 1956.

COMPUBLICATION

the Party leaders were worried about the workers' attitude may be inferred from the Trade Union Chairman's revelation that "since the second quarter of this year, average earnings have been increasing faster than the productivity of labor. 1 At the same time, however, the Party leadership was giving everybody due warning that no political agitation would be tolerated in Czechoslovakia. This was done under the guise of a campaign against alleged espionage activities which offered a convenient opportunity to remind everybody of the existence of the secret police. The campaign started with a Rude Pravo article on October 5, followed on the 13th by the news of the arrest of a large group of imperialist agents, on the 17th by an article in the Bratislava Pravda, on the 19th by another article in Rude Pravo, capped by the announcement on the 21st, of the exposure of an American spy ring." After that, the regime felt it could safely inform the people that they should not expect Polish and Hungarian developments to result in any changes in Czechoslovak policies. Further improvements in the economic situation could not be brought about by "futile unrest." The Soviet Union would always be regarded as the "first country of Socialism, " by the side of which Czechoslovakia marched on "as equal partner."

42. The warning proved effective, for apart from the arrest of two further groups of "American agents" in the latter part of November, the authorities had no occasion to crack down. Some concessions to popular demands were indeed made by the government, but their timing - three weeks after the crushing of the Hungarian revolution - does not make it appear as if they had been primarily inspired by the immediate need to head off an armed revolt. Moreover, two of them, the reduction of the number

¹ Prace, November 17, 1956.

of employees of various ministries, and two amendments to the Penal Code increasing the rights of defendants, announced by Radio Prague on November 24 and 29 respectively, had been promised in the spring. The third concession, a reduction in the prices of food and of some articles such as watches and radios followed the general pattern throughout the Soviet bloc and may have been timed to take people's minds off dreams of political freedom.

43. The Central Committee of the CSCP, meeting in plenary session December 5 and 6, was fully justified in congratulating itself on its success. The final resolution stated:

The firm unity of the working people did not allow even the smallest attempt by enemies from the remnants of the defeated exploiting classes to damage our people's democratic regime. Our Party, working class, and the entire working people honorably stood the test of the past few days.

44. The resolution reaffirmed the CSCP's support for Soviet policies, endorsed the Kadar regime and strongly criticized Tito's Pula speech of November 9, in which he differentiated between Stalinist and anti-Stalinist Communist parties, as "a case of obvious interference in the internal affairs of these parties." Novotny had admitted the day before that it was clear Tito had had in mind the Czechoslovak Party as well when he had spoken of Stalinist methods. Nevertheless,

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Novotny asserted the Yugoslav strictures would not prevent Czechoslovakia from striving for cooperation between the two countries. As to Hungarian developments, he listed among the mistakes of the Rakosi regime the worst excesses in violation of socialist legality, inadequate attention to the activities of reaction, insufficient links between the Party and the people, neglect of the Patriotic People's Front, and unwillingness to accept the friendly advice of the CPSU. He criticized Gero strongly for his failure to take effective action to consolidate Party control, to exercise vigilance, and to deal with justified dissatisfaction of the people, and the Party as a whole for weak leadership, deficient organizational and ideological ability, and lack of contact with the masses. Novotny's sharpest criticism was levelled at the Nagy government, which had committed the unforgivable offenses of withdrawing from the Warsaw Treaty and proclaiming Hungary's neutrality.

45. Implicit of course in Novotny's speech and in the final resolution was the boast that the Czechoslovak leaders had not been guilty of the mistakes made by Rakosi and Gerd. On second thought, however, they must have realized that they were themselves committing the mistake of complacency, for a few days later, in the joint Czechoslovak-East German declaration published on December 21, 1956, they admitted the "need to learn from events in Hungary." But the only lesson they drew was the duty "to increase political and ideological vigilance." The need for it was illustrated the very next day by two articles. In Slovenske Pohlady (December issue), the Slovak writer Jan Poliak asked whether the fact that not a single spark of doubt and fear had come out into the open was not "proof of passive acceptance on the part of mercenary propagandists?" K. J. Benes writing in Literarni Noviny, the Czech Authors Union weekly, of December 22, denounced the destructive effects of the Socialist system on the individual as well as on society and asserted that the Hungarian tragedy had caused a deep

moral shock, particularly among the young, the remedy for which was to aim "a critical surgeon's knife at our own ranks." The Soviet Party Congress, Benes wrote, had awakened the moral subconsciousness of the people to what had been "rather academically called violations of socialist democracy and legality." Needless to say, the Party rejoinder voiced by Rude Pravo of December 24 was not complimentary to the author of the article or the editor of the magazine which had published it.

The Year 1957

46. Less than two months after protesting against being classified by Tito as Stalinists, President Zapotocky, accompanied by Novotny and Siroky, journeyed to Moscow and seized the opportunity to revisit the Lenin-Stalin mausoleum, on which occasion he felt the need to lay wreaths on both tombs. The wreath on Stalin's tomb bore the inscription: To the Great Fighter for Socialism—
J. V. Stalin.

47. Another object of the visit was apparently to work out an economic plan to counteract the effects of the Polish and Hungarian uprisings on the Czechoslovak economy. Czechoslovakia had suffered least among the satellites, but the shortfall in domestic coal production was nevertheless a serious handicap. It was aggravated by the decline in Polish coal shipments, to which the chairman of the Planning Commission, Simunek, attributed most of the blame for the need to revise the Second Five Year Plan. The final Soviet-Czechoslovak declaration, issued on January 29, stressed that the agreement was based on "the principle that coordination of the economic plans of the two countries...is important for achieving maximum speed in the development of production forces." The USSR agreed to increase its deliveries of raw materials, particularly

¹ Tvorba, January 10, 1957.

COMPIDENTIAL

of grain and aluminum, and to supply coal, in exchange for machinery and finished products, but there was no mention of Soviet credits, which Czechoslovakia obviously did not need, to match those extended to the other Satellites.

48. A few timid attempts to argue in favor of greater freedom of expression were made in Literarni Noviny (Prague) and Kulturny Zivot (Bratislava), but they were promptly silenced by the Party press. The effectiveness of their admonitions was greatly enhanced by the background of arrests and trials which succeeded each other during the winter. Most of the victims were charged with espionage activities, but in one case eight persons were accused of having exhorted people to demonstrate against the government in October 1956, and of having appealed to the UN to put the suppression of personal freedoms in Czechoslovakia on the agenda. 1 Another group of ten was accused of having established an illegal separatist, Catholic, and fascist organization. 2 Two prominent Slovak writers and Party members were reported to have "resigned" from the Slovak Writers' Union. 3 On April 26, the Slovak Central Committee announced the expulsion from its leadership of a leading Bratislava professor, Andrei Pawlik. At the same time Karol Bacilek, the Slovak Party chief, told a meeting of the Slovak Party Congress that "certain measures" had been taken against Party officials for "shortcomings" in the work of Kulturny Zivot. He further stated that remnants "of the

CONFERENCE

¹Radio Prague, March 11, 1957.

²Radio Bratislava, February 28, 1957.

³Kulturny Zivot, March 4, 1957.

CONTRACT

most dangerous manifestations of bourgeois nationalism, "
the Ludaci group - a fragment of the separatist Hlinka
Party - were still carrying out acts of sabotage and trying
to infiltrate literature and the Party apparatus.

- 49. The Congress expressed its agreement with the views expressed by both Bacilek and Novotny, adopting a resolution stating that revisionism and bourgeois nationalism were the principal ideas which the Party had to combat. However, this did not silence the Slovaks, for in its next issue (May 11), Kulturny Zivot demanded that Marxists "criticize not only bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideologies but also the dogmatic distortion of Marxism."
- 50. Although not officially designated as such, May was in fact "German Bogey Month," a propaganda theme which served the double purpose of bolstering the Communist campaign against West German rearmament and of emphasizing for the benefit of non-Communists the value of Soviet friendship. The visit of a Polish delegation headed by the Prime Minister at the beginning of the month provided a peg on which to hang a joint declaration stressing the dangers of German remilitarization and "revanchism." This was followed by a meeting of Polish, Czechoslovak, and East German parliamentarians in Berlin (May 9-11), which ended with the adoption of a similar declaration, emphasizing concern over the nuclear armament of Germany and the inviolability of the frontiers of the three countries. In the latter part of the month, it was Premier Siroky who visited Berlin and helped to produce a joint communique of similar import.
- 51. The German danger was naturally not absent from the resolution adopted by the Czech Party Central Committee which met June 13-14 to reaffirm its unflagging determination to fight all manifestations of liberalism. The keynote of the meeting was sounded by Jiri Hendrych, one of the Central Committee secretaries, who proclaimed:

COME INDICATE

"We shall not tolerate the hostile campaign carried out under the slogan of the fight against so-called 'Stalinism'... We shall defend the great revolutionary merits of Stalin and his important contributions to the development of our country..." The final resolution affirmed the urgency of an ideological counteroffensive against revisionist tendencies which were not altogether absent even in the Czech wing of the Party, and against the new imperialist tactics which made use of national communism, people's capitalism and other slogans to delude the people. The fundamental bulwark in the ideological struggle, the resolution declared, must be proletarian internationalism, with closer cooperation between Communist and workers' parties. Particularly necessary was the establishment of an international Communist theoretical journal. The resolution stated that the achievement of a classless society was far from accomplished, since important capitalist remnants still existed, notably the kulaks.

52. Considering that Minister of Agriculture Bakula had told the National Congress of Collective Farms three months before that "the political and economic influence of the kulaks has been considerably reduced and curtailed, "I it is obvious that the kulak was being set up as a bogey to justify the Central Committee's appeal for a more vigorous reaction against the lingering effects of the "Thaw." The resolution called, among other things, for an end to criticism used as an instrument of "anti-popular counter-revolutionary elements," a more vigorous education in villages toward socialist agriculture, stepping up of atheistic propaganda, increased concentration on ideological

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¹ Zemedelske Noviny, March 23, 1957. According to Jiri Hendrych, writing in Rude Pravo of April 25, 1958, the number of "real estate owners, kulaks, and entrepreneurs" with their families had dropped from 1, 300, 000 in 1930 to 93,000 in 1955, that is from 10 to 0.7 percent of the population.

conversion of youth and on socialist realism in literature and art, and a sharpening of party propaganda work in the press and radio.

53. From the statements made in the speeches preceding the resolution, the Party leaders had good reasons to tighten the screws. Comrade Rehanek found it "particularly sad to see how some teachers are still under the hold of clericalism." Comrade Skoda criticized the law journal Pravnik which appeared to interpret socialist legality "as being instituted mainly for the defense of the citizens, " apparently oblivious of the fact that the "educational role of justice rests on the fact that the courts pass sentences in different ways on laborers and workers and on enemies of the people. " Comrade Homolka deplored "growing tendencies toward formal styles /especially in painting/ outmoded long ago." Comrade Urban protested against "liquidatory tendencies" in some high schools, which were in general very weak "on the educational side." Some comrades occupying chairs of Marxism-Leninism had even become after the 20th Congress, "supporters of the most varied distorted views and doubts." Comrade Vecker declared that the number of Party members in the youth association declined from year to year, and had dropped to five percent. Comrade Stencl stressed the need to "attract and win over youth for mass and social organizations...but on a voluntary basis and not by force!; there was an alarming number of "groups of juvenile tramps" - for example, 40 in Bratislava alone - whose activities were "either criminal or anti-state." Comrade Bertuska declared that liberalist tendencies appeared "in the work of some state apparatus workers" who interpreted "the theory of the class struggle from the point of view of revisionism and social democratism." He joined Comrade Skoda in his criticism of the administration of justice. There were "liberalist tendencies" among judges, and even public prosecutors interpreted judicial guarantees "narrow mindedly for the exclusive benefit of defendants." Comrade Fierlinger held out little hope of improvement, for, he said, "what is worse is that the influx of students from the legal faculties to the judiciary not only failed to improve the

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composition of the cadres, but on the contrary has worsened it. "I Finally, Comrade Stoll berated the new philosophical theories appearing recently in <u>Literarni Noviny</u> which were "permeated with the spirit of lordish haughtiness and intellectual slight, mainly toward Party functionaries, referred to as dogmatists, bureaucrats, or formerly as Stalinists."²

54. Perhaps the most interesting revelation of the Central Committee meeting was the confirmation of the statement made by President Zapotocky to the students of the Prague Faculty of Law that "Youth has many wrong ideas." The only one, however, which he appears to have tried to correct, in an article in the May issue of the University journal, Vysoka Skola, was that Czechoslovakia was being exploited economically by the USSR, especially in the "particularly important" matter of uranium deliveries. But the students had to take his word for the assertion that conditions were actually "very favorable," for they remained a well-kept secret.

55. The last step to put the Czechoslovak house completely in order for the impending visit of Soviet dignitaries was taken on June 26. What happened behind the scenes is not known, but on the stage of the hall in which the members of the Writers' Union met that day, Jan Otcenesek, its first secretary, disavowed the attitude taken by some of the speakers at the preceding Congress in April 1956 and applauded by the participants, while President Zapotocky recalled Mao Tse-Tung's statement that "poisonous weeds must not flourish." The climax of the performance was the public apology of Frantisek Hrubin, who had drawn the greatest

On July 6, 1957, the Czechoslovak Parliament passed an act providing that in the future all judges would be elected by National Committees and recalled at their pleasure.

² Rude Pravo, June 20 and 21, 1957.

³ Svobodne Slovo, May 21, 1957.

applause at the preceding congress by his call for intellectual freedom but who now vowed that he had never intended to act against the Communist Party. He was followed by the self-castigation of the editors of the literary magazines Literarni Noviny and Kveten, who conceded that the Party criticism of their work had been correct.

- 56. Another loose end was tied up when eight Salesian monks were jailed and the pending trial of other Salesian clergymen and nuns from the Liptal convent was announced. The charges included dissemination of literature hostile to the existing order, teaching boys to hate the regime, being "a Vatican spy center" and being "financed from the U.S." 1
- 57. The purpose of the visit of Khrushchev and Bulganin, from July 9-16, was probably correctly explained by Khrushchev when he said, "You came to see us and we have come to see you, not in order to settle any contentious questions, for we are in full agreement... We have been and we are meeting as faithful friends." Novotny in his reply "proudly reaffirmed the CSPR's adherence to the great example of the CPSU, the most experienced detachment of the international Communist movement and its national center."
- that, because Molotov had been one of the victims of the June purge in Moscow, Novotny's position was in danger were thus proved completely wrong. Moreover, he alone among the Czechoslovak leaders shared the limelight with Khrushchev, who declared how glad he was "that the Central Committee of the /Czechoslovak/ Party has at its head such a loyal son of the Czechoslovak people as Antonin Novotny." Since President Zapotocky also assured his listeners on July 11, 1957, that the Warsaw Treaty would again be invoked

¹ Rude Pravo, June 25-27, 1957.

COMPTEDIT

"if the need should arise...in the interest of strengthening socialism and crushing any attempt to stage a counter-revolutionary putsch such as happened at the time of the Hungarian events," Novotny's position seemed unassailable.

- 59. The final joint communique, issued on July 16, 1957, expressed mutual support for the measures taken by both Central Committees, denounced factionalism and revisionism, and emphasized the need for greater economic coordination. More interesting perhaps was the remark made by Khrushchev in the course of his visit incidentally only a few weeks after the further degradation of Malenkov, the hapless advocate of the more abundant life that people with full bellies were more apt to appreciate Marxism. The remark may well have been inspired by the contrast between conditions in Czechoslovakia and in other Satellites.
- 60. During the remaining summer months, the energies of the administration appear to have been chiefly devoted to spy and treason trials, of which there were six in August alone, and to the stepped-up collectivization drive. Siroky boasted on August 9 that over half the agricultural land was now socialized, but he called for intensified efforts, necessary in order to achieve by 1960 the 30 percent increase in agricultural production called for by the plan.
- 61. The situation was different in Slovakia. There, according to the report of Pavol Majling, member of the Slovak Central Committee, to a Committee meeting on August 22 and 23, only 43.7 percent of the land was socialized. The fault lay, if Majling is to be believed, with "poor mass political work." It must have been very poor indeed, judging by the remarkable result he described. This was that medium farmers continued to hesitate to join cooperatives while numerous kulaks unfortunately did. Poor mass political work was also blamed by Majling for the serious lag in compulsory farm deliveries.

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- 62. With regard to industrial output, "the overall targets were fulfilled, or even greatly exceeded, " Majling announced, but he failed to explain how this was to be reconciled with his subsequent complaint that there were serious lags in the production of coal, building materials, and certain engineering products and "frequent shortcomings" in railway transportation. In the all-important engineering industry, 100,000 square meters of floor space were not being used. On the other hand, the situation with regard to the "number of housing projects which remain partially completed...was allowed to worsen progressively." The main cause was the "low level of building management and organization." Badly lagging also were building activities in "fuel industries, engineering, transport, and water conservancy." As in the past, "the number of uncompleted projects kept growing" and "resources were being unduly dispersed."
- 63. Turning to the consumer industries, Majling deplored the decadence of the once flourishing damask and luxury furniture industries, which used to be highly prized by the "most fastidious customers abroad." Now their products were so poor that they were unsalable abroad, but they continued to consume expensive raw materials. As for the products and services of producer cooperatives, Majling added, "the services to the public are being neglected" and "shortcomings in the quality of work, long terms of delivery, and over-charging persist."
- 64. Nevertheless, Majling was not discouraged. The "expanding socialist emulation in connection with the coming 40th anniversary of the great October Revolution" could be counted upon "to defeat the unfavorable tendencies which are revealed by a decrease in the fulfillment of tasks in the past period." 1

¹Radio Bratislava, August 23, 1957.

CONTIDUNTINE

65. It may be added here that building in the Czech lands was lagging as badly as in Slovakia and that in the main Ostrava-Karvina coalfield, the only one producing coking coal, the deficit in black coal production reached 165,000 tons by the end of August, according to a Ministry of Finance statement. The problem facing the authorities was indeed hard to solve. The wages paid to the miners were high enough to permit a great deal of absenteeism, but still insufficient to attract the amount of new labor needed by the mines. By September 1957 the only solution the Party had been able to think up was a spate of eloquent appeals to the workers' patriotism by a number of important personages attending the elaborate celebration of Miners' Day.

66. A comprehensive plan to remedy the "serious defects" from which some important Czechoslovak industries, including the vaunted machinery industry, suffered, was outlined by Novotny in his report to the Party Central Committee on September 30, 1957. Novotny reminded his audience of the improvements in the standard of living achieved during the past year - price reductions, wage increases, a shorter work week, higher pensions and improved health insurance - but declared that its further improvement "must be far better insured than hitherto by the consistent detection and utilization of the immense reserves of our national economy." Ways to fulfill these desiderata were apparently easily found, for the final resolution announced that gross industrial production was to rise 56 percent by 1960, rather than 50 percent as provided in the Second Five Year Plan, that average wages were to rise 8.3 rather than 6.4 percent, but that costs were to be reduced by only 12.6 instead of 14.8 percent, and labor productivity to rise by only 39.1 instead of 42 percent. At the same time capital investment was to be reduced by 4 billion korunny. This, it was implied, was to be achieved by concentration on immediately productive enterprises, but there was no explanation of the apparent incompatibility of increased gross production with lower labor productivity, higher costs, and reduced investments. Presumably it was to be brought about

CONTIDURING

by "better utilization of productive capacities...and by a substantially better utilization of fuels, metals, and other raw materials..." This, in turn, was apparently to be achieved by means of an industrial decentralization program similar to the Soviet program. As an afterthought, Rude Pravo added a campaign against industrial theft, bribery, and speculation, crimes it attributed chiefly to the mistake of appointing too many experts of bourgeois origin to managerial posts. At the same time, although land socialization had proceeded at an unprecedented rate, the collectivization drive was to be further intensified. 2

67. The prospects of a better life were apparently too remote for the younger members of the Gzechoslovak population who craved more immediate satisfactions, failing which they sought escape in alcohol or relief from the drabness of life and regimentation in attacks on the police. Lidova Democracia of October 22, 1957, in its belated report of a violent brawl between "hooligans" and the police which occurred in Prague on October 12 and had been observable from foreign embassies, spoke of the young people being drunk, but also accused them of being influenced by "Polish bait" - an allusion to the student unrest in Warsaw provoked by the suppression of the liberal journal Po Prostu. Minister of the Interior Barak, in a press conference on October 21, conceded that occurrences with "antistate trends" had recently taken place in Prague, and confirmed that "344 hooligan gangs" were known to exist in the country. Rude Pravo, of October 22, reported that 142 arrests had been made in various larger cities since the 17th.

¹ October 23, 1957.

² In a letter "to all working people" (October 18), the Central Committee reported the socialization of 61.4 percent of all agricultural land.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 68. President Zapotocky died on November 13. Novotny's election to the Presidency, while retaining the first Party secretaryship, was the outward confirmation of the undisputed pre-eminence he enjoyed since Khrushchev's visit. It was chiefly interesting as an indication that even the appearance of collective leadership was no longer deemed desirable in Moscow, where Khrushchev himself was soon to cumulate the premiership and first Party secretaryship.
- 69. Novotny's first acts as President did nothing to belie his reputation as a harsh taskmaster. An order of the day to the armed forces, issued on November 29, echoing the note sounded in Moscow after Zhukov's ouster, called for intensified indoctrination of officers and men, and tighter control over them by the Party, the need for which had been stressed by an editorial in the army daily Obrana Lidu two days earlier.
- 70. The usual Presidential amnesty, announced on December 1, benefited in practice only petty offenders, and even these only if they were not guilty of "anti-state" crimes, including theft of socialist property. A decree of November 30 tightened Party control of the local public security organs.
- 71. An early state visit to the capital of the Slovak brother nation was clearly in order, especially as the motive for ignoring precedents by electing to the Presidency the Party secretary instead of the premier, could be claimed to be the fact that Premier Siroky was a Slovak. Novotny, therefore, proceeded to Bratislava with an imposing retinue of high Party and government officials to take part in a series of ceremonies designed to flatter Slovak national pride, but also to expatiate endlessly on the themes of the indispensable Slovak solidarity with the Czechs and of the need to combat foreign efforts to inflame the remnants of Slovak bourgeois nationalism. The appeals to Slovak solidarity were particularly timely in view of the concurrent decentralization of economic management which the Slovaks could easily

CONTIDENTIAL

TO AND THE PARTY OF THE PARTY.

abuse in their own selfish interests. There was also the danger that the Slovaks might not give a very friendly welcome to those of the Czech employees who, having lost their jobs in Prague as a result of the campaign to reduce excessive administrative staffs, were slated to be sent to help Slovak enterprises.

of Novotny's address to the Central Committee on December 20. In accordance with the recent Moscow Twelve-Party Declaration, he called not only for a more determined struggle against revisionism on the part of all Communists, but also for resolute pursuit of the united-front strategy, including attacks on the "national bourgeoisie," under Soviet leadership of course. The only Socialists excluded by Novotny were the Yugoslavs, whom he failed to mention when he called for more frequent conferences of Communist parties.

The Year 1958

73. Proof that Novotny's state visit to Slovakia and his sermons on the sins of nationalism and revisionism had not achieved the desired result was forthcoming at the next meeting of the Slovak Party Central Committee, held January 9-10, 1958. First Secretary Bacilek charged that important economic and government posts had been infiltrated by "numerous former capitalists, kulaks, and ex-officials of the Slovak Fascist state," and that bourgeois manifestations had been visible in "the films, press, radio, and television." The victim this time was a deputy chairman of the Slovak Board of Commissioners, Sebesta, who was abruptly dismissed. A new twist to Party policy in dealing with Slovak recalcitrance was revealed in the announcement by Minister of the Interior Barak, on February 7, that 34 former followers of the Slovak separatist leader, Hlinka, had been arrested, and would be tried for their 15-year-old crimes. A few weeks later five Slovaks were sentenced to imprisonment for subversive acts and terrorism in the 1949-1956 period. At the same time, announcements of arrests and sentencing of "spies" in the entire Republic continued unabated.

COMPANIE

74. The severe reductions in force in the central government departments in connection with the proposed reorganization and decentralization of the country's economic structure, scheduled to be completed by April 1, and in full swing in February, provided the regime with an excellent opportunity to combine the useful with the agreeable. The criteria for the dismissals were frankly admitted by Party Secretary Cernick, in the January 1958 issue of Zivot Strany, to be political. The decisions, it appears, were not taken this time by the personnel or cadre chiefs of the departments, but by special commissions including at least one member of the Party Central Committee. The order of precedence for dismissals began with "unreconstructed bourgeois elements" and ended with persons who had served under more than one of the former regimes. Although the number of victims was considerable - the staff cutbacks in the Production, Communications, and Health Ministries and their subordinate organizations in Prague alone were of the order of 54 percent, affecting 36, 500 people - very little was heard about them. Those dismissed, being under police surveillance, preferred to keep silent. Ostensibly, the operation was not restricted to "unreliable elements." A Rude Pravo editorial of February 26, 1958, stated that "we decidedly must not confuse them with the increasingly large number of honest, good workers who are going to leave the central apparatus in order to make it smaller, more flexible, and more economical." But judging by the criteria applied in the case of dismissed school teachers, such as having relatives abroad or in prison, practicing a religion, having been a former member of the bourgeoisie or even "having failed to enter actively into the construction of socialism, " it may be surmised that political considerations were actually decisive in practically every case.

75. Political considerations must be interpreted broadly, for according to reliable reports, the Party seized the opportunity to thin its own ranks by getting rid of inactive and unreliable members who had joined after the war for opportunist motives. They lost both their job and the Party membership to which they probably owed it.

COMPLETE

- 76. The 19th anniversary of the creation of the whilom Slovak state provided the regime with a suitable opportunity to step up the campaign against Slovak nationalism. At the press conference called on March 14 to launch the subsequent violent publicity campaign against this heresy, Barak amplified his earlier announcement on the subject. The "exposed" former Hlinka guardists, whose number had now reached 47, were accused of the mass murder of over 400 people, including 14 French, British, and American soldiers, whose deaths had hitherto been charged to the Germans. The evidence, on which the majority were sentenced in groups after a series of trials extending over a number of weeks, seems of doubtful value, in view of the fact revealed by inquiries in Washington that eight of the ten alleged American victims had returned to the U. S. while the other two names could not be identified.
- Central Committee which met April 2 and 3, Novotny outlined the main theses of the full report he was to deliver to the forthcoming llth Congress of the Party, setting forth the tasks to be accomplished toward the attainment of the Party's immediate goal, "the completion of socialist construction in Czechoslovakia." There were five main tasks: a decisive victory in socialist production relations in the countryside; the removal of the "remnants of antagonism in class relations"; the liquidation of the kulaks and the "exploiting elements in the towns" i.e., doing away with one of the antagonists; a further rise in living standards by a "substantial rise in labor productivity"; a "broadening of socialist democracy," and "the completion of the cultural revolution and the broadening of the moral and political unity of the people."
- 78. The two things to which Novotny attached particular importance were first "the crucial political task" of bringing agricultural production "up to the standards of the foremost countries of the world," and second, the "strengthening of Party control over the economy, effective Party supervision and consistent application and implementation of the directives and resolutions which have been adopted."

CONTIDENTIALE

These theses were to be discussed during the following weeks at lower and medium level Party meetings, whose views would be taken into account in the final draft of the report to the 11th Congress.

- 79. Novotny seized the opportunity to mention the quite unrelated subject of nuclear disarmament which had been for some time a favorite topic of Czechoslovak propaganda. In the words of Radio Prague (April 3, 1958), "he drew attention to the danger to peace of the feverish atomic equipment of the NATO countries, and particularly the decision to equip the West German Bundeswehr with atomic weapons." It was of course Novotny's duty as a Communist to support the Soviet campaign against atomic weapons, and as a Czech he was especially interested in keeping the country in which the Sudeten Germans had found refuge as weak as possible.
- 80. Prime Minister Siroky delivered a report on the reorganization of the national economy. The new system was supposed to have gone into force on April 1, 1958, but much remained to be done. Among the measures still awaiting implementation, Siroky mentioned the creation of a State Planning Commission and of an Economic Council. From his statement that "with this council's important supervisory functions, great significance attachs to the intensification of the activities of the Ministry of State Control, the Ministry of Finance, and the State Bank, "it seemed to follow that reorganization meant chiefly a change in the method and amount of detail, and not in the degree, of central control.
- 81. In Slovakia, at any rate, economic reorganization seemed to be far from contributing to Socialist unity. As one of the reforms consisted in the merger of individual but related enterprises into larger "production units," having their headquarters "in the centers of their production branches, "I most of these were naturally located in the industrially more advanced Czech lands, with the result that

¹ Radio Prague, February 26, 1958.

CONLIDENTIVE

many Slovak enterprises were subordinated to Czech enterprises, much to the displeasure of the Slovaks. In Kosice, even the Party organization voted a resolution disagreeing with the "affiliation" of the local plants to a "parent" in Brno. 1

- 82. The trial of the alleged members of the Hlinka guards culminated during the course of April in the sentencing of five of them to death and 22 to long prison terms. The proceedings and the attendant publicity revealed an intention, not only to intimidate Slovak nationalists, but also to discredit the Catholic Church, whose priests were accused of having blessed the murders. 2
- 83. On the other hand, a concession to Slovak nationalism was made in the revised Military Service Act, which authorized use of the Slovak language in the Army concurrently with Czech, although Czech remained the language of command.³
- 84. At the Slovak Party Congress (May 16-18), the Czechoslovak chief delegate, Deputy Premier Vaclav Kopecky, adopted the attitude of injured innocence. He simply could not see any reason for a "separatist" movement under the present regime. "The recognition of the Slovak nation as a separate entity, "he claimed, "was the result of the struggle waged by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia." But he himself implicitly admitted that mere recognition had not meant much, by proceeding to stress and to exaggerate the importance of "the far reaching measure which /in 1956/considerably enlarged the powers of the Slovak national bodies."

¹ Pravda (Bratislava), March 30, 1958.

² Radio Prague, April 26, 1958.

³ Pravda (Bratislava), April 12, 1958.

COMPUTATION

- 85. Bacilek, the First Secretary of the Slovak Party, expatiated on the benefits derived by Slovakia from the union. Slovakia's share in the country's industrial output had risen from 13.8 percent in 1948 to 16.7 percent in 1957, and he revealed that plans were under consideration to build a large metallurgical plant in Eastern Slovakia presumably to complete the "Huko" project which had been abandoned in 1952.
- 86. The picture in agriculture was spotty. It was true that, on one hand, 61.8 percent of Slovak cultivated land was now socialized, as against 65.5 percent in the whole country, but crop production had only increased 2.5 percent in the last two years, whereas the increase planned for the 1956-1960 period was 34.9 percent.
- 87. The Slovak Congress was a particularly appropriate forum for comments on the wickedness of Yugoslav "revisionism," the cause of violent agitation in the Communist world at the time. Kopecky declared that "revisionism only serves the interests of imperialism" and that the Yugoslav program was permeated with revisionist views. Bacilek considered the Tito regime to have "placed itself outside the ranks of the international Communist movement" the identical terms used by Rude Pravo in its May 8 editorial on the subject. Actually, the Czechoslovak criticisms of the Yugoslav program, although severe, were not as violent as the Chinese, Bulgarian, or Albanian. But neither were the Soviet attacks, and the Czechoslovak weekly Tvorba had pointed out once again in an earlier article on the same subject, reprinted in Pravda: "In the CPSU we see the international Communist movement's advance guard, and a model for us. "1 In the same spirit, the final resolution of the Slovak Party Congress reaffirmed the "leading role of the USSR in the socialist camp."

¹ Radio Moscow, May 7, 1958.

The Eleventh Party Congress

- 88. The 11th Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, which met from June 18 to 21 under the stirring slogan, "Under the leadership of the CSCP, forward to the completion of socialist construction," failed to live up to expectations. Perhaps the only minor sensation was the fact that the slogans chanted in unison at the opening of the Congress, "Long live the CSCP, long live the Soviet Union, long live People's China," failed even to mention the smaller, but allegedly "equal" and "brotherly" nations of the socialist camp. The speeches and the final resolution were mainly variations on the well-worn themes of capitalist imperialism, socialist unity and love of peace, revisionism, the immediate economic tasks, and party organization.
- 89. Among the more interesting statements was Novotny's admission that the "international wave of anti-Leninist revisionist opinions grew proportionately with the anti-Communist campaign of slanders of the bourgeoisie." However, he claimed, "the dangerous wave of revisionism was turned back...Our Party nipped in the bud various revisionist and bourgeois liberal tendencies, which had started to appear in isolated cases." The state policy toward Yugoslavia, which was in large part responsible for the revisionist wave, would be to continue to maintain such mutual relations "as will be of benefit to both countries."
- 90. The elimination of the remnants of antagonistic classes was proceeding apace, according to Novotny. In the past six years the arable land held by kulaks had dropped from 14.1 to 1.6 percent, the socialization of farmland was expected to be "basically completed" within two years the figure for June I, 1958, was 71.5 percent and "workers" now made up 62 percent of the country's population. By 1965, industrial production was to increase 90 to 95 percent, agricultural production 40 percent, building 70 to 80 percent and personal consumption 45 percent over the 1957 figures. The housing problem would take a little longer to solve, but it would be done in 1970.

¹Radio Prague, June 18, 1958.

COMPIDENTIAL

- 91. Although the reduction in central office forces was supposed to have been accomplished by April 1, Novotny claimed without further explanation that the economic reorganization was proceeding smoothly, the forces having been reduced by 9,500, with 30,000 more to follow. However, he apparently attached greater importance to other aspects of the reorganization, such as "the increased authority of enterprises and plants," and "the fact that the national Party/ committees today administer directly one full third of the national economy."
- 92. The final resolution implied, although it did not say so directly, that the final victory of socialism in Czechoslovakia could be expected in about two years, stating that of crucial importance for its achievement was socialist ownership of the means of production, and that the transition from agricultural small-scale production to cooperative large-scale production could be completed within that period. The resolution further implied that all boasts of socialist successes notwithstanding, there was considerable room for improvement in the standard of living, particularly necessary being "a speedier rise of the personal consumption of families with several children" - a rather unexpected admission in a workers' state. Other tasks to be achieved were the solution of the housing problem, the extension and improvement within the shortest possible time of "services paid for by the population, "the creation of conditions for more employment in the country, and the improvement of care provided for the children of working mothers. But even such bright prospects were not expected to neutralize the enemy, rather the opposite. The resolution found it necessary to proclaim once again the Party's resolve to frustrate the attempts of the "defeated bourgeoisie and of imperialist agents" to thwart its constructive efforts. "To this end, we must strengthen our people's army, the security organs, the prosecutors's offices."

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- 93. The Party naturally relied heavily for support on its principal subsidiary organizations, the trade unions and the Youth League. Nothing particular was said about the trade unions, but Miloslav Vecker, chairman of the central committee of the Youth League, confessed that he was not quite pleased with conditions in his bailiwick. He claimed a membership of 1, 112, 000 for the organization, but seemed to be preparing an alibi by "making no bones" about the fact that the League included a number of youths who "joined in the belief that it would bring them advantages or from other mercenary motives," or "who remembered socialism only when it is a question of drawing high salaries." He ended with the rather surprising statement that "just now, special urgency attaches to the demand for the education of youth to be communist."
- 94. As far as Party affairs were concerned, the Congress brought out that it had 1, 422, 199 members, a drop of some 77,000 since 1954.1 The proportion of workers, 60.9 percent, according to figures published in Zivot Strany of June 1958, was comparatively high, and that of farmers, 4.4 percent, comparatively low. Presumably to correct this imbalance, the probationary period for members of cooperatives was reduced from two to one year. But although the Congress, in the words of Rude Pravo of July 29, 1958, "placed a special emphasis on the importance of admitting new members, " nobody seems to have been able to think of some way of achieving the aim, unless it be assumed that the other change in the Party statutes, the insertion of the statement that "the Czechoslovak Communist Party is the leading force in our society, " was made in the hope of inducing more people to join.
- 95. The new Central Committee elected by the Congress had 97 full members and 50 candidate members, an increase of 13 and 22 respectively. The Politburo membership was also enlarged from 7 to 10, one of the new posts going to Jiri Hendrych, the Party's ideological spokesman, and a member of the Secretariat. Another went to a Slovak,

¹ Rude Pravo, June 12, 1954. This figure was given by Novotny in his June 18 report.

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thus raising Slovakia's representation on the Politburo to three, one of them a candidate member (out of a total of three such members).

96. Rumors had been current after the CEMA meeting in Moscow in late May that the Czechoslovaks were very dissatisfied with some of the decisions on specialization of production in the different member countries which would have eliminated some of the Czechoslovak consumer industries. When, therefore, Novotny, accompanied by a large retinue of Party dignitaries, but not by Siroky, unexpectedly left for Moscow on July 2, although he had been there as recently as at the end of May, it was generally believed that the chief purpose of the visit was to obtain a revision of the decision. However, nothing has since transpired to substantiate that belief, and Khrushchev, in his speech of welcome at the Moscow airport, declared pointedly:

It is a pleasure to feel that your present visit, like our previous meetings, is not bound up with the need to settle any issues or misunderstandings, for there are no such disputed issues between us and there never have been.

Novotny thoroughly agreed. "Throughout the history of our party," he said, "there has not been a single question on which our views diverged from the views of the CPSU."

97. The explanation given for the visit, to return Khrushchev's official visit of the year before, seems, therefore, to have been true. Nevertheless, there may have been a subsidiary motive, namely to show that whatever reasons might have prevented Khrushchev from attending the Prague Party Congress as he had the recent Berlin and Sofia Congresses, disagreements between the CPSU and CSCP had not been one of them. Just the opposite may have been true, judging from the compliments showered upon Novotny and by the pomp of his reception in Moscow.

CONTRACT A T

The Situation in Czechoslovakia in the Fall of 1958

98. Czechoslovakia enjoys the distinction of being considered the "model satellite," presumably because it is economically the most prosperous and politically the most stable of the Soviet dominated countries of Eastern Europe. However, that does not mean that everything is perfect in Czechoslovakia, either from the Communist point of view of from that of the people.

99. The regime professes to find its greatest cause of satisfaction in the field of industry. According to the figures for 1957, published by the State Statistical Office on February 6, 1958, national income rose by 7.4 percent and industrial production by an average of 10.2 percent, production of producers goods accounting for 9.7 percent and of consumers goods for 10.9 percent. But the regime complained that real wages, up almost 6 percent, had been rising faster than productivity, and warned that wages would have to be "stabilized" in 1958. The figures for the first six months of 1958 show a further wage rise of 2 percent, accompanied, however, by an 8 percent increase in labor productivity, an 11 percent increase in production of producers and a 12 percent increase in production of consumers goods. 1

100. On the face of it, the regime appears to have nothing to worry about in industry. However, the picture may not be as rosy as it looks. In the first place, the veracity of official statistics is as doubtful in Czechoslovakia as in other Communist countries. The trade union journal Prace of May 15, 1958, related, for example, that an official delegation which had come to the Jan Sverma mine to find out why construction was behind plan, noticed a bulletin board claiming that the plan was being fulfilled 117 percent, and was told by one of the workers that 'we had reported 89 percent but as you can see /they/ made it 117 percent. We work under

¹ Radio Prague, August 6, 1958.

different plans." Incidentally, the delegation also heard bitter complaints about living conditions, especially the food. Moreover, present and future trouble is indicated by such items as the publication of a letter of the Ostrava Party Committee to the local miners dealing with a 25,000-ton shortfall of coal in July chiefly due to absenteeism, 1 by an article in Rude Pravo of August 27, reporting that employees in the Ostrava Karvina mines had been shifted or sent to do manual work for neglecting their jobs or making false reports on production progress, or by the announcement that a new wage system is to be worked out and to be introduced gradually beginning in October 1958.² The system is designed to "insure correct wage differentials" and to eliminate the discrepancies between wage rates and planned average earnings; it cannot but have the result of increasing the norms for some workers and reducing the earnings of others, which explains the warning of Rude Pravo (August 28, 1958) that, "we must expect incorrect views to be put forward by some /workers/." It is true that the regime has endeavored to sweeten the pill by implementing the principle of greater worker participation in management, one of the prerequisites for the completion of Socialism. But it seems doubtful whether the workers will be greatly mollified by such concessions as the transfer, by a June 6 decision, of the administration of the enterprise fund of the workers, formerly known as the director's fund, to the workers, for they must administer it through the trade unions. Other forms of worker participation in management promised at the Party Congress by Frantisek Supka, chairman of the Trade Union Council, such as participation in the reorganization of the wage structure, are equally to be exercised through the trade unions, whose main task would consist in convincing the workers that their interests and those of society are identical. As for "the most important form of

¹ Radio Prague, August 5, 1958.

² Radio Prague, July 21, 1958.

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worker participation in management, the organization of socialist competition, "Supka did not make it clear whether or not that, too, would have to be carried out through the trade unions, but either way it was not likely to appeal very strongly to the workers.

101. Although Bruno Koehler's report on a meeting in a Prague factory, published in Zivot Strany No. 6, March 1957, is over a year old, the dissatisfaction of the workers with political conditions reflected in the report is undoubtedly as great today as it was then. Koehler reported that the workers asked for

an extraordinary congress of the Party and new Party line...doubts were expressed as to the obligatory character of Party decisions for the government, parliament and non-Communist organizations...a demand was voiced that the press censorship and jamming of enemy broadcasts be abolished... Your organization even suggested that the need for the workers militia be revised.

102. In agriculture, the situation was conceded to be unsatisfactory. The regime continued, it is true, to chalk up impressive victories in its land socialization campaign - 57.4 percent of all agricultural land socialized by the end of 1957, 1 72 percent by the middle of 1958.2 But in 1957, at any rate, Rude Pravo admitted that "though there was a tremendous development of farmer cooperatives, we did not achieve the planned increase in production...the total agricultural production remained roughly on the level of 1948." In its August 30, 1958, editorial, Rude Pravo admitted that "plant production as a whole" was

¹ Rude Pravo, February 12, 1958.

² Radio Prague, August 6, 1958.

CONTIDUCTION

still at pre-war level. There are also great problems in stockbreeding, cattle stocks are constantly declining. At the same time, we are greatly and unhealthily exceeding the plan of bulk buying of beef. This year also the number of pigs has declined...

Outlining the causes of the unsatisfactory progress in agriculture, the February 12, 1958, editorial of Rude Pravo admitted that "the rapid growth of the cooperatives and the simultaneous failure to implement the required increase in agricultural output compels one to ask whether the failure is not a result of this rapid growth," but of course it denied the possibility categorically. Responsibility for these unsatisfactory results lay entirely, the paper declared, on the inadequate crops raised on "the hundreds of thousands of hectares held by individual farmers."

103. In its August 30, 1958, editorial, however, the same newspaper felt bound to concede that

there are many unsolved problems in many agricultural cooperatives, especially in the new ones. But in many of the old ones, it is also necessary to devote constant attention to the attitude of the members of the cooperative to common farming. Cooperative funds, too, are a problem. They are insufficient even for machinery, instrument and building replacements, and give no possibility for further expansion of the work of the cooperative.

unknown but, however favorable they may be, they are unlikely to contribute much toward reducing the 30 percent gap still remaining to be filled by 1960, or even the somewhat more realistic 40 percent target by 1965, which was set by Novotny at the 11th Congress. Yet any serious discrepancy between industrial and agricultural plan fulfillment is bound to upset the over-all economic plan.

COMPUNITION

105. All reports from Czechoslovakia agree that there, as elsewhere in the Orbit, the spurt in land socialization in the last two years was only achieved by means of the strongest, albeit indirect, pressure. What made the regime, which in 1953 and 1954 had frankly confessed that collectivization achieved by coercion was self-defeating, change its mind, has not been revealed. Possibly the explanation is to be found in the increased ability of the USSR, thanks to the contributions of the former virgin lands, to make up deficiencies until such time as the peasants become convinced that the change was for their own good. How soon the peasants will eventually see the light is problematical, but in the meantime they cannot be very favorably disposed toward the regime. The problem of the "socialist reeducation of cooperative farmers" remains to be solved, Rude Pravo admits. 1 Neither can those peasants who have so far managed to escape collectivization, but who have been warned that their reprieve cannot exceed two years, be very pro-Communist.

2ation of government and of economic management now being carried out will ultimately benefit the economy is unpredictable. But there can be no doubt that in the short run their effect must be bad. Reductions in forces can certainly increase efficiency, but not if the criteria are political, or social. There is no doubt that many of the best qualified employees have been dismissed and have either swollen the ranks of the unemployed or accepted menial jobs in their places of residence rather than give up their dwellings. "The recent reorganization," declared delegate Bilak at the Party Congress, "has released many capable people, and we would like them to work in our province. Some have been assigned to us, but nobody came." As for those who happened to be

¹ July 25, 1958

² Rude Pravo, June 19, 1958.

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Party members, they apparently did not even lose their jobs. "It is very harmful," Bilak complained, "if a comrade who refuses to accept another job remains in his old position without any consequences whatever...Party discipline has considerably declined with many functionaries."

107. Another possible drawback of the economic reorganization which increases still further responsibilities of national committees is illustrated by the blunt statement in Rude Pravo (March 11, 1958): "Regional national committees have had the state farms under their control for one year. Their work did not improve in the meantime but deteriorated still further."

The Standard of Living

108. Although everybody seems to agree that the Czechoslovak standard of living is the highest in the Orbit, it is a surprising fact that most Czechoslovaks, in conversation with foreigners, express dissatisfaction on that score. Whether the explanation is that the standard of living is indeed still low in Communist Czechoslovakia although the country had been prosperous long before the war and had suffered little damage, or that it is human nature never to be satisfied, the important fact is that the non-communist Czechoslovaks are not content even from the material point of view. Most of them complain of inadequate wages and high prices, and of very poor housing. They put part of the blame on the Russians, who are accused, not only of aiding and abetting the communization of the country, but also of appropriating the profits from the uranium mines, and of draining Czechoslovak resources by forcing the country to supply distant backward countries with capital goods on unprofitable terms.

109. The intelligentsia appears to have been successfully cowed, but that does not mean that it has been won over. This was clearly implied by Kopecky in his speech at the Slovak Party Congress on May 17, 1958. "Marxism-Leninism," he said,

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is a revolutionary theory and can be mastered l-best by the working class; this is the task of the Communist Parties. In the case of an intellectual, a deep spiritual transformation is necessary if he is to master Marxism-Leninism. ²

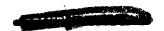
Kopecky further expressed "deep disappointment" at the part played by Hungarian and Polish writers in October 1956. Czechoslovak writers, he said, had taken "some steps in the same direction," but "our Party and working class showed unmistakable firmness and determination and would not permit the importation of the so-called liberalization." The answer of many Czechoslovak writers was the same as that of their colleagues in the other satellites. They refrained from writing anything "substantial about present day life," Zivot Strany complained in its April 1958 issue.

The Slovaks

110. The strongest opposition to the regime is to be found in Slovakia, with its predominantly rural and intensely Catholic population. Among the Slovaks, anticommunism is combined with Slovak nationalism, which appears to be still very strong and rejects domination by Czechs, whether Communist or not. Paradoxically, the special effort made by the Czechs to raise the level of industrialization, agriculture, and housing in Slovakia to their own level by proportionately larger investments has increased rather than reduced mutual animosities. The Slovaks resent the presence of Czech executives and technicians needed to build and to run the new industries, and many Czechs resent the ingratitude of the Slovaks who show little appreciation of the privileges they enjoy at their expense.

¹ To "master" is presumably a Marxist euphemism for to "accept."

² Pravda, Bratislava, May 18, 1958.



The Party

111. If, nevertheless, everything has remained quiet in Czechoslovakia for the last two years, this is certainly due in no small part to the remarkable cohesion of the Communist Party, the only one in the Satellites in which no factions are identifiable and in which no demotions and, even less, expulsions of prominent figures have occurred in the last two years, although Czechoslovakia has the largest Party membership in proportion to its population, 12 percent. Neither does one hear of conflicts and struggles for power between top leaders such as occur even in the model Communist state, the USSR. Differences of opinion have indeed been reported between Novotny and Siroky for example, but the reports are contradictory, insofar as some describe Novotny and some Siroky as the tougher and more "Stalinist" of the two. What actually matters is that differences of opinion at the higher levels have apparently always been composed, since 1956, at any rate. The only known exception was the case of Cepicka, who was dismissed, however, on the charge of Stalinism in the first flurry of uncertainty caused by Khrushchev's secret speech. Novotny appears to have imposed democratic centralism successfully with the help of Moscow and to be firmly in the saddle. At the lower Slovak Party level, however, unity seems to be less perfect. Stefan Sebesta, former deputy chairman of the Slovak Board of Commissioners, was dismissed from the Slovak Politburo in May 1958 on the charge of bourgeois nationalism, and the expulsion of three more Party officials for "anti-Party methods" and former membership in a Fascist group was announced on August 19, 1958.

112. One might expect the Czechoslovak Party leadership to be highly satisfied with the situation, for they have the proportionately largest, and also the best disciplined, Communist Party in the Orbit. But there is a large fly in the ointment. The leadership, Rude Pravo of August 28, 1957, revealed, is seriously concerned over the unsatisfactory



growth of the Party, 1 especially over its static and aging membership, for the percentage of members and candidates under 26 years of age is barely 6.5. But little progress has been made, judging by the Rude Pravo editorial of April 26, 1958. According to the editorial, "a demand was expressed at all district conferences that more young people should be in the Party." Deputy Bilak declared at the Party Congress that "the 1958 new candidates, admitted in the first five and a half months of the year, are not enough to implement all the tasks set by the Party. "2 The percentage of young men already members of the Party at the time they are recruited into the Army has dropped from 5.5 percent in 1953 to 3.3 in 1958, and the average number of young soldiers who join the Party is only 3.5 percent. 3 As for the next lower age group, it is characterized by the fact, which Mlada Fronta was frank enough to admit, that "the greatest trouble fof the Youth League is with the meetings which nobody wants to attend. "4 Radio Prague, besides complaining of the "serious shortcomings in the ideological influences of the Youth League on students, " practically admits that Communism instead of increasing its hold on the young, is losing ground: "Some Youth League organizations... do not fight against bourgeois habits and tastes which are penetrating into student life..." The excuse given by Rude Pravo in its April 28, 1958, editorial is that according to older members, "it is difficult to train youth for Party work, youth who did not know capitalism from their own experience and who did not pass through the hard school of class struggles."

¹ Actually, there even has been a drop, from 1, 489, 234 in 1954 to 1, 422, 199 in 1958.

² Rude Pravo, June 19, 1958.

³ Rude Pravo, June 20, 1958.

⁴ June 12, 1958.

⁵ September 1, 1958.



Comment and Outlook

113. Of all the European Satellites of the USSR, Czechoslovakia has, with the possible exception of Albania, certainly performed more satisfactorily from Moscow's point of view during and since the crisis which shook the Soviet Orbit after the 20th Congress. The Czechs, who because of their relatively high standard of living and education and of their genuine democracy since 1918, were expected to be the most refractory to Communism, remained quiet, while the Hungarians and Poles rebelled. The trend toward liberalism common to all the Satellite Communist parties was weak in the CSCP - with the exception of its Slovak wing, where it merged with the strong Slovak nationalist sentiment - and was easily subdued. After a short period of vacillation following the 20th Party Congress, the Czech Party leaders, like their colleagues in the majority of the Satellites, gradually tightened the screws once again, reverting in some respects, collectivization for instance, to Stalinist extremes. While the situation with regard to arbitrary arrests, terture of suspects, and similar excesses, has improved since the Stalin days, the prisons are said to be crowded with "enemies of the regime." Spy trials and vigilance campaigns largely nullify whatever benefits could be expected from a limited increase in cultural relations with the West and in tourism. In the intellectual and artistic fields, the only gains which have been preserved are a certain broadening of precepts regulating forms of artistic expression.

114. The mere fact that the Czechoslovak - and the Soviet - leadership has deemed it necessary to tighten censorship and police control indicates, however, that the Communist regime is not as firmly in the saddle in Czechoslovakia as it may seem to be. The leaders have undoubtedly serious reasons for apprehension.

ll5. It is true that revisionism in the Party has caused less trouble in Czechoslovakia than elsewhere in the Orbit. B. Ponomarev, in an article on revisionism in the June 1958 issue of Kommunist (Moscow), mentions Rumania,



East Germany, and Bulgaria among the socialist countries in which revisionist movements have been suppressed, but not Czechoslovakia, obviously because it was not dangerous enough there to call for drastic measures. Nevertheless it exists, albeit in an embryonic form. Rude Pravo of June 10, 1958, devoting a long article to the problem, maintained that although "revisionist tendencies and incorrect views" had been "overcome" in Czechoslovakia, the struggle had to be continued relentlessly. Revisionism, the newspaper claimed, was all the more insidious and difficult to combat in Czechoslovakia because here it had not been "formulated...as a definite system of views..." although such attempts had been made "as was shown in the cases of Kuehnl and Kusin of the Prague Economic College, or of Zd. Dubsky, of the Ostrava Mining College, and other places." But, Rude Pravo concluded, if the efforts in the struggle against revisionism, both on an international scale and in Czechoslovakia, were intensified, "contemporary revisionism will be defeated as totally as were the revisionists of the past. " Revisionism, one may conclude, undoubtedly exists in the CPCS in a latent state, but has never been allowed to gather momentum. Moreover, although an indeterminate number of Party members, especially Slovak, were in favor of liberalization, that is, revisionism or national Communism, they included no one endowed with the requisite qualities of leadership. Czechoslovakia has produced only one national Communist of any prominence, Vlado Clementis, liquidated in 1952. But that he, if he had survived, or any other Slovak, could have led a national Communist movement is unlikely, for Slovak nationalism is primarily anti-Czech.

116. The "Stalinists," on the other hand, were not lacking in leaders. The three most prominent Party members, Novotny, Zapotocky, and Siroky, had, one may presume, long before the Polish October agreed that liberalization was a slippery slope and that if they adopted a hard line and firmly repressed the movement before it got out of hand, they could not lose. If liberalism became



dominant in Moscow, they would be able to invoke in their favor the principle of different roads to socialism, which could not exclude firmness; if Stalinist ideas prevailed, they could only earn praise. Both Novotny and Siroky - Zapotocky was too old - apparently lacked the ambition or the courage to emulate Tito.

cohesiveness and discipline, which was manifested, once the struggle for supremacy between Slansky and Gottwald had ended in 1952 with the victory of the latter, by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, is undoubtedly chiefly due to the unique circumstances that even today the pre-March 1958 coup members are in the majority, albeit a small one, ¹ and that Party membership is only slightly higher now than before the seizure of power. The proportion of true Communists is, therefore, presumably much higher in Czechoslovakia than in the other Satellites, where the vast majority of Party members are of the bandwagon type.

118. However, as old age takes its toll, the balance cannot but shift in favor of younger and less reliable elements. Figures given by Minister of the Interior Barak to the June 1958 Congress revealed that in the newly elected Central Committee, post-war members already outnumbered their pre-1945 colleagues by 84 to 66.

119. In Slovakia, the Party membership is only 5.5 percent of the population, as against 12 percent in the Czech lands. The Party is finding it particularly difficult to recruit an adequate proportion of workers, collective farmers, or members of the technical intelligentsia,

According to Zivot Strany of June 1958, there were on January 1, 1958, 1,422,199 Party members and candidates, 50.4 percent of whom had been members for over 10 years. Party membership had been 1,159,164 on March 15, 1946, and had reached a high of 2,311,066 in May 1949, after the coup.



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according to First Secretary Bacilek's report to the Central Committee on July 4, 1958.

tion to rise like the Poles or Hungarians against the regime is, therefore, undoubtedly to a large extent due to the stronger core of sincere and disciplined Communists. This condition would explain the non-emergence within the Party of the necessary prerequisite to a mass movement, that is a large and vocal faction of "revisionists," under courageous leadership, to challenge and intimidate the Stalinist leaders during the crucial spring and summer of 1956, when they themselves were not sure whether they could count on Moscow's backing. Under the circumstances, certain groups of the population, chiefly the students and the intellectuals, showed considerable courage in challenging the Party leadership in the spring of that year.

121. Although the importance of economic factors among the causes of popular uprisings is a subject of controversy, it may be assumed that the relatively high standard of living of the Czech workers did tend to offset other causes of dissatisfaction with the regime and explains why, unlike the Polish and Hungarian workers, they abstained from open manifestations of discontent. The fact that the currency reform of 1953, which largely wiped out savings, did provoke serious unrest among the working population seems to prove that Czechoslovak workers are influenced by economic considerations in their attitude towards the regime.

122. However, by 1956, economic conditions had improved, and while they were good enough to give no motive for active opposition, they were not good enough to win over the majority of the workers to Communism. The workers know that Czechoslovak prosperity antedated Communism, nor can the Communists in Czechoslovakia - or in East Germany - claim the merit of "rapid industrialization."





admit that not all workers are devoted to the party of the workers' power, they cannot conceal the fact completely. Thus, Radio Bratislava (September 29, 1958) admitted that among the workers there are "also people with an undesirable political past who have taken up manual work in factories" but cannot be considered workers "in the political sense" and are frequently guilty of "counter-revolutionary" criticisms. Rude Pravo (September 19, 1958) went even further and complained that "not only former proprietors, but also a section of the working people is affected /by the petit bourgeois mentality/, sometimes even workers who have improved their living standards..."

124. Significantly, all Party Secretary Jiri Hendrich had to say about the workers' and employees' class was that before 1948 "it was the exploited class" while today it was "the ruling class." He abstained from claiming that they were particularly satisfied with the change.

in Slovakia, was and is certainly strongly anti-regime, if only out of resentment of the means used or threatened to "persuade" them to join collective farms. Hendrich admitted as much when he wrote: "To induce a farmer to join a cooperative is one thing. To make him a socialist cooperative farmer in the true sense of the word, to remold him in the spirit of socialism, is quite a different thing." Under modern conditions, however, peasant opposition to a regime can only be passive or individual.

¹ Rude Pravo, April 25, 1958.

² Rude Pravo, April 25, 1958.

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126. Hendrich made no claim to the allegiance of the bourgeoisie, rather the opposite. He wrote:

We must reckon with the fact that a rather broad stratum of the people of our country, mainly the petty bourgeoisie and a considerable portion of the intelligentsia, are today experiencing in their daily lives, material positions, thoughts, and views, complicated changes on the path from petty bourgeois democracy to socialist principles. They still harbor many illusions about bourgeois democracy...

strata of the population were presumably the "1, 300, 000 real estate owners, kulaks, and entrepreneurs" who, in 1930, had made up with their families 10 percent of the population but were now reduced to a little over one-half of one percent. The favorable conditions for building socialism in Czechoslovakia, Hendrich said, had made their "mass elimination unnecessary." All that was needed was a "policy of restriction and suppression." Most of the victims of the recent decentralization and debureaucratization of the Czechoslovak economy, which has, in Prague alone, uprooted or rendered jobless, or threatens to do so, over 100, 000 people, belong to that class.

that the advantage of ridding government and business offices of unreliable elements outweighs the disadvantage of rekindling fading animosities, the decision to reduce "oldage pensions and other social security benefits of former political and economic exponents of the capitalist system," as Radio Bratislava (September 8, 1958) put it, is more difficult to understand. The only explanation seems to be vindictiveness.



129. It is certainly true that the anti-regime movement seems to have been far less strong in the Czech lands than in Poland or Hungary, and that up to a point the attitude of many Party members reflects the intensity of popular feeling. A number of reasons for the difference can be cited. In the words of Ivo Duchecek:

If there is such a thing as national character, the Czechs (and to a lesser degree the Slovaks) appear, in their modern political history, as pragmatists, less inclined than their northern and southern neighbors to indulge in spectacular and suicidal actions...It seems that those who protest by action are rather the exception than the rule. 1

In other words, the Czechs at any rate are far too practical people to have engaged in an action which meant almost certain conflict with the overwhelming might of the Soviet Union without any assurance of Western help. Although conditions in 1956 were far different from those prevailing in 1939, they were bound to remember and to invoke their experience in that crisis to justify their prudence in 1956, and as the fate of Hungary proved, their pessimism was well founded.

130. Czech pragmatism and materialism are also strikingly manifest in the lukewarm attitude of the Czechs toward religion. Communist anti-religious policy, which in Poland aroused such resentment among the people, and still does in Slovakia, provokes little opposition among the Czechs. Moreover, while it is probably true

^{1 &}quot;A 'Loyal' Satellite: The Case of Czechoslovakia,"

The Annals of the American Academy of Political and
Social Science. May 1958, p. 117.





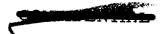
that few revolutions have been set off by material privations, a man who is comfortably off is certainly less likely to mount the barricades than a hungry man who has nothing to lose. Most Czechoslovaks are in the former category.

motive which played such a large, perhaps even decisive part, in the October events in Poland and Hungary. Although the proximity of Russian forces undoubtedly helped, the Czechoslovak regime was essentially a native product, albeit the work of a minority, and the constant irritant supplied by the physical presence of Soviet troops was absent. Neither is it likely that the Russians treat the Czechoslovaks with quite the same arrogance as the other Satellite peoples. The material superiority of the Czechs over the Russians in every respect except power is too obvious to be denied, and they have never had to come to Moscow for financial assistance.

than Poles or Rumanians still does not mean that the average Czech is satisfied with the relationship. Apart from the fact that it is Russia which prevents the Czechs from having a government and a social system of their own choosing, they are convinced that the Russians are monopolizing the profits from the uranium mines and are responsible for the unprofitable long-term credits extended to underdeveloped countries to further the Kremlin's political ambitions. Another item on the debit side of the ledger is the annexation by the Soviet Union of Carpatho-Ruthenia in 1945. Today, there is little left in Czechoslovakia, except in the Party, of the Pan-Slavism and pro-Russianism of earlier days.

Czech raison d'etat. The Soviet Union is the only power on which they can count to support the status quo in the Sudetenland. The question is much less vital for the Czechs than for the Poles, for the Czechs have not annexed a rich





pre-Hitler German territory, but they certainly do not want to take back some three million Germans embittered by heavy losses and long years of exile, and who would demand far-reaching autonomy, a satisfaction the Western powers could hardly refuse to their German ally. In southern Slovakia, too, the situation was such as to give pause to nationalistically minded Czechs in October 1956. Any change in the status quo promised to reopen the problem of the large Hungarian minority inhabiting that area.

Summing Up

- 134. Summing up developments in Czechoslovakia since the spring of 1956, it may be said that they revealed strong opposition to Communism among the same population groups which led the anti-regime movements in Poland and Hungary, the intellectuals and the students. However, the Party lacked a popular revisionist leader, and the Novotny-Zapotocky-Siroky triumvirate had no effective opposition to contend with when it decided to halt the liberalization movement. The majority of Czechs and an even greater majority of Slovaks are certainly opposed to the regime, but are unlikely to take any action for a number of reasons.
- 135. The Communist Party is proportionately the most numerous and at the same time the most disciplined of the Satellite parties, and neither Novotny nor Siroky, who have done very well with the help of Moscow and lack Tito's assets, has shown any signs of wanting to give up the bone for the shadow.
- 136. A conflict with Russia would deprive the Czechoslovaks of their only support against the Germans in the problem of the Sudetenland. As long as a German-Czechoslovak agreement on a mutually acceptable solution to that problem has not been reached, one can hardly expect Prague to break with Moscow. To do so it would have to be sure of unlimited Western support and of the West's superior power.





- 137. The Czechs are constitutionally disinclined to spectacular but risky gestures and are not egged on by material privations. There are probably fewer Patrick Henrys to be found among the modern Czechs than in most other nations, and it is true that little could be gained from another abortive revolt.
- 138. On the other hand, the Communists themselves admit that in spite of the exceptionally favorable conditions they enjoyed for 20 years, to develop "within the framework of bourgeois democracy" the revolutionary movement, "certain liberalistic, bourgeois democratic, and reformist illusions were erected which we are apt to meet to this day...It is important that party propaganda deal with these illusions, especially among the young and the intelligentsia."
- 139. In other words, according to the Communists, the advantages and disadvantages for them of Czechoslovakia's inter-war bourgeois democracy, unique in Eastern Europe, practically cancelled each other out. The Party could develop greater strength there than in the other Satellites, but, at the same time, the bourgeois mentality grew stronger.
- 140. That, together with the Czech national character and foreign political interests, would explain the apparent paradox presented by the relative passivity in 1956 of the freedom-loving Czechs. For bourgeois virtues are not of the explosive and heroic kind.
- 141. Nevertheless, the Communist leaders know perfectly well that still waters may run deep and that popular moods may change. They are taking no chances. Peoples' courts and police are more active than ever, and the administration and economic management are being purged of unreliable elements, regardless of the loss in talent and

¹ Rude Pravo, August 27, 1958.



experience and of the fact that the Communists are making bitter enemies out of many people who had, even if reluctantly, come to terms with the regime.

- 142. Whether these precautions are really called for or not, they prove that the Communists believe they can only maintain themselves in power by force, and under Russian protection even in the Satellite in which conditions appeared most favorable to their triumph. There was no anti-Russian feeling a feeling which was enough to discredit Communism in most Satellites the regime had not been installed at the point of foreign bayonets; Czechs and Russians were bound by a common interest in keeping Germany weak, and above all, the country had already reached a high level of industrialization.
- 143. The explanation seems to be that although Communism in Czechoslovakia was unemcumbered by any damning Russian associations, this did not make up for the fact that it lacked even the bait of rapid industrialization which it could dangle before the industrially more backward nations of Eastern Europe. Except for the "New Class" of Party members, few Czechs can expect to derive any advantages from Communism, while many experience its disadvantages. As for the Slovaks, the mere fact that industrialization comes to them at the hand of Czechs is enough to rob it of much of its potential appeal. Too little is left to overcome the general hostility of Slovaks to Communism and all its works.
- one of the strongest, perhaps even the strongest in the Satellites, and the Czech people show little disposition to rise against the regime. Yet it is in Czechoslovakia that Marxism has probably met with its most signal failure. For leaving aside East Germany with its special problems, Czechoslovakia was the only Satellite boasting a large and advanced workers' class, and therefore, offered ideal conditions for the success of Communism according to the theories of Marx. Nevertheless, it is only by intimidation and force that the regime maintains itself in power, and even if the Czechoslovak economy has progressed, the gains are far from equalling those that went into the making of the West German "miracle."

